

# NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino

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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
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## Prop. 63 Improving Lives and Communities

The nation's recession and resulting state budget crisis have strained every part of our safety net, and California's community mental health system is no exception. But as communities across the state acknowledged **Mental Illness Awareness Week** this October, they also recognized that the investments made through Proposition 63 (the Mental Health Services Act) have positioned California to better meet the mental health needs of people in our communities now and in the future, and to do it more cost-effectively.

In resoundingly adopting Proposition 63 in 2004, California's voters recognized that our mental health system at that time was seriously underfunded and crisis-driven. Prop. 63 is responsible for a major shift in the way California provides mental health services -- away from a model that provided primarily crisis care and costly institutionalization, and toward a new system that includes a focus on prevention and early intervention. Because of Prop. 63, we now prioritize community involvement, and recognize the complex array of factors -- from housing to employment -- that are necessary ingredients to recovery for people with mental illness.

The programs made possible with funding from Prop. 63 are as varied as California is diverse, because they are designed by local communities to serve their unique needs. For example, over the past six years, with the use of MHSA funding, the County of San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) has been able to implement over 30 significant programs that address issues such as Crisis Intervention, Prevention and Early Intervention and homelessness. The Community Crisis Response Teams (CCRT) is an example of one of the programs put into place. CCRT, referred to by Lt. Dale Mondary, Crisis Intervention Training Coordinator for the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department, as a "God Send," consists of teams of specially trained mental health professionals who provide mobile crisis assessment and intervention for children and adults brought to the attention of law enforcement and other emergency responders. Due to the collaborative efforts of DBH, law enforcement and local hospitals in fiscal year 2010/11,

CCRT received 7,275 calls for assistance, including 4,158 crisis calls. Of those 4,152 crisis calls 2,336 (56%) were diverted to more appropriate and less restrictive levels of care.

While intended to expand the availability of services, reductions in state spending on mental health since it passed have made Prop. 63 an increasingly important cornerstone of the state's overall mental health delivery service system. Hundreds of millions of dollars cut from the community mental health system and other safety net programs during the recession -- and resulting state budget crisis -- mean we have considerable work ahead to ensure quality, cost-effective mental health services are available to everyone who needs them.

With the state's safety net tattered and a slow economic recovery predicted, we know that without this initiative we would see many more people with mental illness on our streets and in our jails and emergency rooms.

Prop. 63 is a vital part of a community mental health system that benefits all Californians, and improves the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of people with serious mental illness every day.